

REMARKS

The application has been amended and is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-8 remain in this application. Claims 9-11 are canceled without prejudice.

Claims 1-8 have been amended in a manner supported by the specification and the drawing figures as originally filed; no new matter is introduced by way of these amendments. The claims are further amended in consideration of U.S. practice and preferences.

The Official Action rejected claims 7-8 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Mombour (EP 1247716; "MOMBOUR").

The Official Action rejected claims 1-6 and 9-11 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Barker et al. (US 6,446,820; "BARKER") in view of MOMBOUR.

In response, it is firstly noted that the claims have been amended as stated above. It is respectfully submitted that neither BARKER nor MOMBOUR, individually or in combination, teach or suggest a towing arrangement for a train coupler having a clamp ring 32 in threaded engagement with a forward end of a deformation tube 17, as recited by amended claim 1.

The Official Action, on page 4, offers slit ring 16 of MOMBOUR as teaching the inventive clamp ring. The Official Action states that MOMBOUR teaches the slit ring 16 being connected to the deformation tube 14 via a threaded joint in the

form of a male thread on the outside of the ring and a female thread on the inside of the tube.

Respectfully, this is not believed to be true. On the contrary, MOMBOUR teaches a slit ring 16, operatively part of a deforming member but not in threaded engagement with the deforming member or any other element. At best, MOMBOUR teaches screws 17 in threaded engagement with apertures 28,29 securing plate 24 and thrust plate 18 (paragraph [0067]; Figure 2). The slit ring 16, by contrast, is shrink fitted onto the deforming member and against the tapers (paragraphs [0023], [0026], [0069]).

MOMBOUR Figure 2 illustrates a tube 15 axially arrested in the deforming tube 14 by virtue of the slit ring 16 engaging a forward taper 19,20 and a rear taper 13 on the deforming tube 14 (paragraphs [0056], [0058]; Figure 2). In the direction toward the left-hand side of the Figure (the "draft direction"), the connection between the deforming tube 14 and the inner tube 15 relies on the engagement between the forward tapers 19, 20 and 22 of the deforming tube 14, and on the slit ring 16, respectively (Figure 2). The slit ring 16, however, is secured by shrink fitting to the rear end of inner tube 15 by a thrust plate 18, which in turn is secured to the inner tube 15 by screws 17 in threaded engagement 28,29 with a plate 24 in the inner tube 15 (Figure 2; paragraphs [0023], [0026], [0069]).

Neither the weak tapers 19,22 nor the small diameter threads 28,29 ensure the integrity of a draft gear design when draft loads are applied to the connection between deforming tube 14 and inner tube 15. Moreover, the slit ring 16 is engaged to the rear end of the inner tube 15 by shrink fitting. In contrast, the present invention ensures the draft gear under normally expected forces in the draft direction by means of the recited clamp ring 32 in threaded engagement with the forward end of the deformation tube.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that neither BARKER nor MOMBOUR, individually or in combination, teach or suggest a towing arrangement recited by amended claim 1. It is also respectfully submitted that claims depending from claim 1, as amended, are patentable over BARKER and MOMBOUR at least for depending from a patentable claim. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

From the foregoing, it will be apparent that applicants have fully responded to the May 23, 2008 Official Action and that the claims as presented are patentable. In view of this, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the claims, as presented, and their early passage to issue.

In order to expedite the prosecution of this case, it is requested that the Examiner telephone the attorney for applicants at the number set forth below if the Examiner is of

the opinion that further discussion of this case would be helpful.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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